

Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* successfully nesting in a suburban house in Kampala, Uganda

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Des Perroquets jaco *Psittacus erithacus* nichant avec succès dans une maison à Kampala, Ouganda.

Un couple de Perroquets jaco *Psittacus erithacus* qui, depuis début 2008, passait la nuit dans le toit d'une maison à deux étages à Makerere West, Kampala, Ouganda, y a niché et élevé deux jeunes en 2009. Les œufs ont apparemment été pondus début février. C'est la première fois que la nidification dans un immeuble est signalée pour des Perroquets jaco vivant en liberté.

Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* normally inhabits primary and secondary lowland rainforests, as well as forest edges, clearings and gallery forests, and nests in holes 10–30 m above ground in large trees (Fry *et al.* 1988). This, however, does not apply to a pair of Grey Parrots that have roosted in the roof of a two-storey residential house in Makerere West, Kampala, Uganda, since early 2008 (W. A. Zawedde pers. comm.) and that subsequently also bred there (Fig. 1). The house is c.5 km from the city centre and 2–3 km from the outskirts, in an area of suburban housing and small businesses.

We first checked the roost on 27 February 2009, when photographs taken by R. Kiryo revealed an egg (Fig. 2). The nest was under the eaves, c.1.5 m from the lowest coping tile on the roof, which was open at its lowest edge, and

was made from wood 'shaved' from the rafters supporting the roof. The birds were often seen resting on the guttering near the entrance to their nest, particularly in the hour or two before roosting, usually at c.19.00 hrs. Two young were seen on 4 April, when they had started developing sparse grey down and, based on Fry *et al.* (1988), were estimated to be c.1 month old. They were observed in the nest until 13 June when the nest was empty. It is believed that the young fledged because DP saw four birds circling the house on 10 June. This suggests that eggs were laid in early February. Egg laying in Uganda, based on Carswell *et al.* (2005), has been recorded in May, July and September. All four birds continued to roost in the roof after the young had fledged, and were still doing so at the time of writing (August 2009).



Figure 1. The house where a pair of Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* nested, with the red arrow showing the entrance hole, Makerere West, Kampala, Uganda, 2009 (Lilian Twanza)

La maison dans laquelle le couple de Perroquets jaco *Psittacus erithacus* a niché, la flèche rouge indiquant l'entrée, Makerere West, Kampala, Ouganda, 2009 (Lilian Twanza)



Figure 2. Two young Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* in the nest, Kampala, Uganda, 23 May 2009. The red arrows show rafters that have been 'shaved' (Lilian Twanza)

Deux jeunes Perroquets jaco *Psittacus erithacus* au nid, Kampala, Ouganda, 23 mai 2009. Les flèches rouges indiquent les chevrons qui ont été 'rognés' (Lilian Twanza)

It is unknown why these parrots chose to nest in the house or how they got there, but it could have been the next best alternative to a tree hole. It is also suspected that the birds might originally have escaped or been released from captivity, although they appeared to behave like wild parrots in every other respect. Many Grey Parrots are kept as pets in Kampala (C. Dranzoa pers. comm.). They are quite commonly seen flying over the city, which has many trees. Grey Parrots were also recorded roosting in a house in the Central African Republic in the 1980s (R. Massa pers. comm.) but this is the first time that free-living birds have been reported to nest in a building.

Acknowledgements

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References

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